PART I

An Overview
of
Vernacular Chant

What is meant by "Vernacular Chant"?

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Vernacular chant is, strictly speaking, chant sung in a local language as opposed to that in an official or universal language. For the purposes of this presentation, we will be referring specifically to *English* chant.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), one of the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963:

• 116. The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services. But other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action...

• 117. The typical edition of the books of Gregorian chant is to be completed; and a more critical edition is to be prepared of those books already published since the restoration by St. Pius X. It is desirable also that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies, for use in small churches.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

"In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and "the common prayer," but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people, according to those norms laid down in Art. 36 of this Constitution."

(SC #54a)

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

"But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, *and to some of the prayers and chants*, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters."

(SC #36)

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

"Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them. "

(SC #54b)

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

Diocesan Regulations Concerning the Vernacular

Baltimore:

No. 163. Latin songs may be sung by the choir where participation will not be hindered in any way. This does not mean, however, that those Ordinary or Proper parts of the Mass which must be performed according to the rubrics can be in Latin.

Chicago:

No. 701 All sung Masses are to be in the vernacular except on special occasions when Latin is permitted to preserve the rich tradition of Gregorian chant and polyphonic music which is wedded to the Latin language. Care should be taken that the use of this music is meaningful to the particular worshipping community.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

The Role of Chant in the Documents of Vatican II

Diocesan Regulations Concerning the Vernacular

Columbus OH:
"All scheduled Masses should be entirely in the vernacular and provide for the active participation of the faithful attending."

Kansas City:
Beginning Sunday, November 29, 1964, the people's parts of the High Mass may be sung in English as they are said at Low Mass. This includes the Proper and the Ordinary of the Mass.

San Diego:
"The Ordinary and Proper of the Mass should be sung in English, but Latin motets may be used (*e.g.,* at the Offertory, Communion or as a recessional after Mass)."

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Q: How is it possible to introduce Latin Chant in a liturgical environment where most Catholics, particularly younger Catholics, are unfamiliar with both Latin *and* chant?

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Q: How is it possible to introduce Latin Chant in a liturgical environment where most Catholics, particularly younger Catholics, are unfamiliar with both Latin *and* chant?

A: As the primary obstacle is the Latin language, it may be prudent to introduce vernacular chant, either as a long-term pastoral solution, or as a transitional step towards the eventual use of Latin chant.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

What parts of the Mass should be chanted?

Dialogues and Responses

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Dialogues and Responses
The Ordinary of the Mass

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Dialogues and Responses
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The Propers of the Mass

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Directors and musicians will need to prepare and educate themselves...

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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- Basic chant technique – notation and interpretation.

- Characteristics of English texts – Pronunciation, accent, rhythm and inflection.

- Proper performance of chant melodies (neumes and melodic conventions) using English texts.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Directors and musicians will need to prepare and educate themselves...

•Basic chant technique – notation and interpretation.

•Characteristics of English texts – Pronunciation, accent, rhythm and inflection.

•Proper performance of chant melodies (neumes and melodic conventions) using English texts.

•Proper performance of Psalm-Tones using English texts.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Adapted Chant vs. Newly Composed

Adapted Chant vs. Newly Composed

ICEL Chants

English versions of
Chant hymns such as
Pange Lingua
Salve Regina
found in mainstream
hymnals

The Exsultet in the
New Missal

Simple English Propers

Sacred Music Project
(Fr. Kelly)

Simple Choral Gradual

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Modern Notation vs. Square-Note

Modern Notation vs. Square-Note

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Modern Notation vs. Square-Note

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form
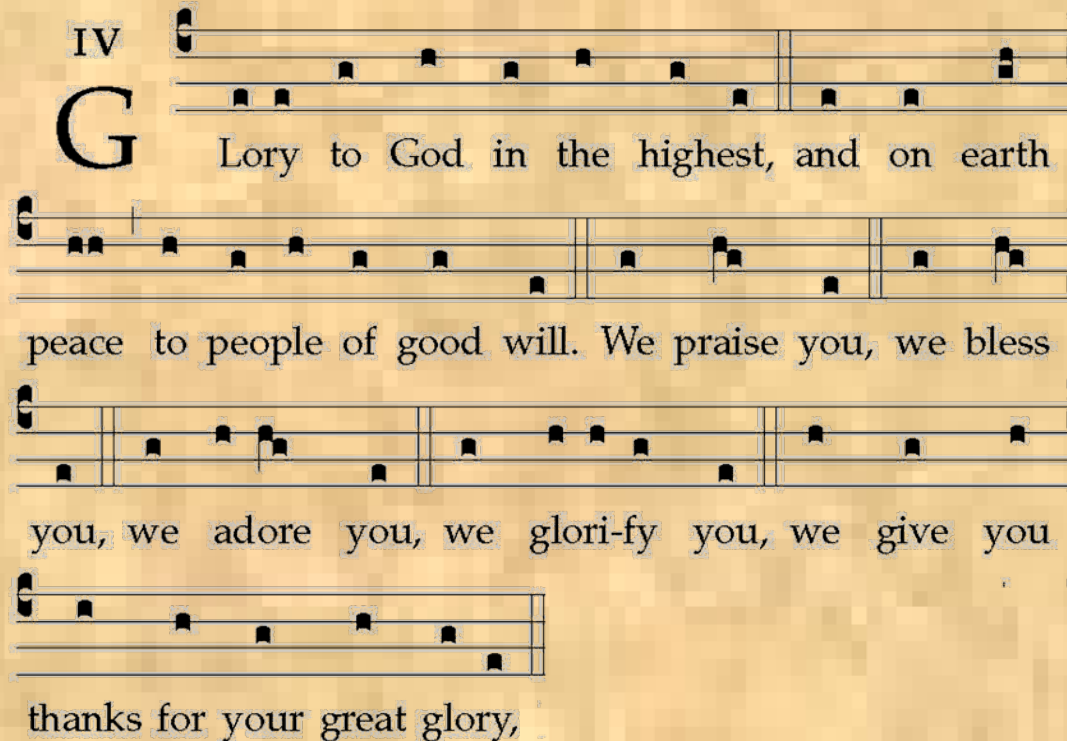
Modern Notation vs. Square-Note

IV

G Lory to God in the highest, and on earth

peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless

you, we adore you, we glori-fy you, we give you

thanks for your great glory,

Although there are some obstacles at first, it is preferable to teach your schola/choir square-note as this will give much greater access to the vernacular chant literature.
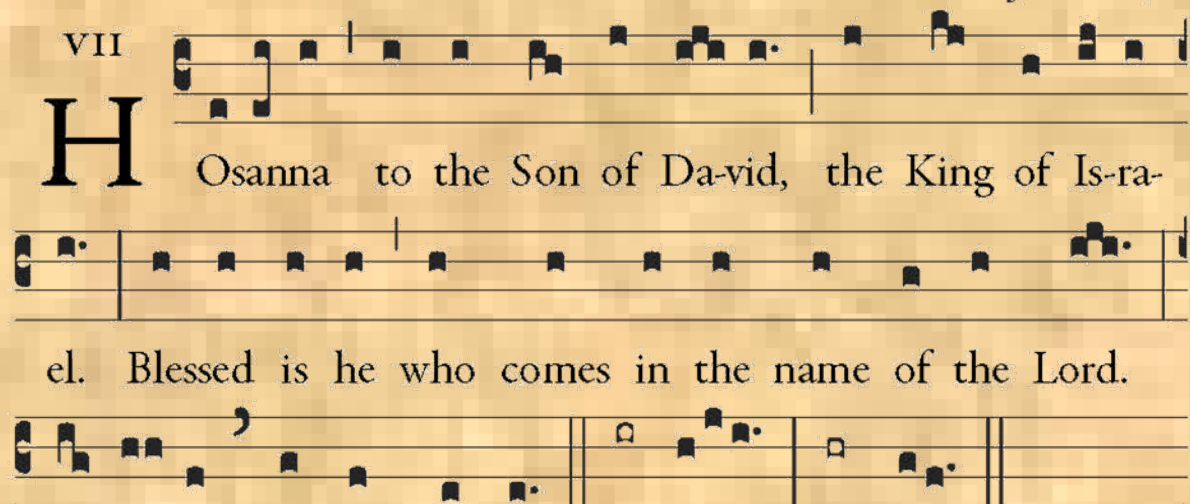
Equalist (Solesmes) vs. Semiologic Interpretation

The strict application of Solesmes –style equalism results in some awkward forcing of English texts into an unnatural rhythm.

Hosanna — Cf. Mt 21, 9

VII

Osanna to the Son of Da-vid, the King of Is-ra-el. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosan-na in the highest.
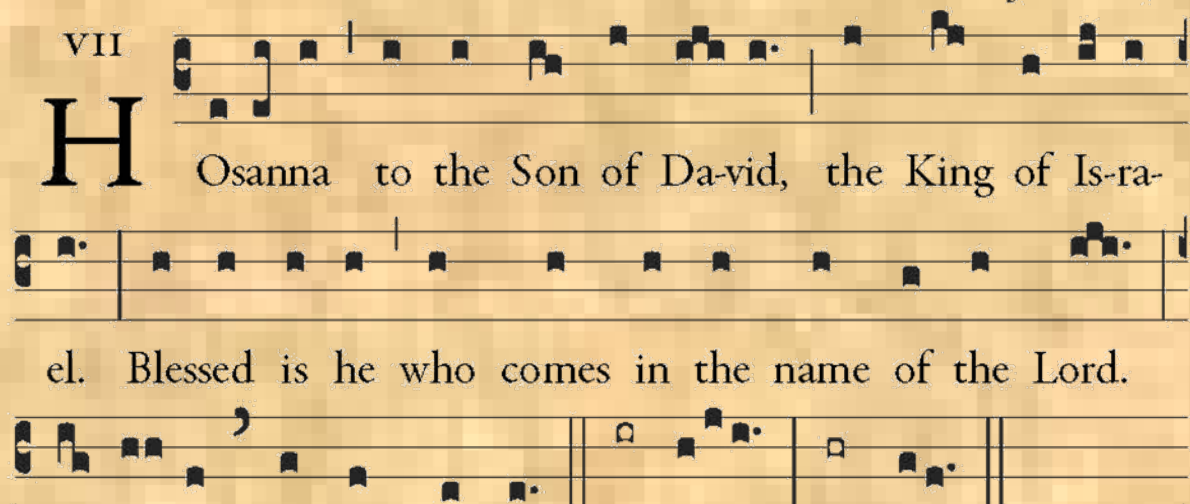
Equalist (Solesmes) vs. Semiologic Interpretation

As both "interpretive methods" for Gregorian chant are specific to the Latin language, it would make more sense to develop a distinct methodology for vernacular chants.

Hosanna   Cf. Mt 21, 9

VII

H Osanna   to the Son of Da-vid,   the King of Is-ra-

el.   Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosan-na   in the highest.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Chanting in English

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What's Different?

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- Pronunciation (particularly vowels)

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- Punctuation and Accent (rhythm)

Chanting in English

What's Different?

- Pronunciation (particularly vowels)

- Punctuation and Accent (rhythm)

- Increased emphasis on diction and clarity

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PRONUNCIATION of ENGLISH for CHANT

Vowels

- Vowels should be mitigated using the closest possible Latin equivalent.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PRONUNCIATION of ENGLISH for CHANT

Vowels

- Vowels should be mitigated using the closest possible Latin equivalent.
    - *AH* sound as pronounced in *anima*
    - *EH* sound as pronounced in *ecce*
    - *EE* sound as pronounced in *vidi* or *in (sometimes modified to a rounded* ĭ)
    - *OH* sound as pronounced in *dominus* or *nobis*
    - OO sound as pronounced in *cum* or the English *boot*

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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- Diphthongs are generally sung using the initial vowel, with the secondary formation sung as a terminal sound without transition.
  - AI or AY   =   EH (ee)
  - EA   =   EE (eh)
  - OI or OY   =   OH (ee)
  - OU or OW* =   AH(oo)   *when in a single syllable word or when terminal

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PRONUNCIATION of ENGLISH for CHANT

Consonants

Pronounced (articulated) consonants must be closed when they are terminal.

B ≠ (buh)	N ≠ (nuh)
D ≠ (duh)	P ≠ (puh)
G ≠ (guh)	T ≠ (tuh)
K ≠ (kuh)	V ≠ (vuh)
M ≠(muh)	

"R" is flipped when intermittent, and dropped when terminal.

"S" is not aspirated when final.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PRONUNCIATION of ENGLISH for CHANT

Su- den - ly , a sound came from heaven
Sah-deh(n)-lee, a sah(oon) kehm frah meh-fehn

like the rush of a might – y wind,
lahk thah [ɾ]ah shah fa mah(ee)-tee wee(nd),

in the place where they were sit-ting,
ee(n) thah pleh sweh theh weh(r) see-tee(ng)

Al- le – lu - ia.
ah- leh-loo- (ee)ah.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PUNCTUATION

Sud-den-ly,/ a sound came from heav-en like the rush

of a might-y wind,/ in the place where they were sit-ting,/

al- le-lu- ia; //

The punctuation of the text is generally expressed by the placement of barlines in the chant score.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

ACCENTED SYLLABLES

Sud-den-ly,**/** a sound came from **heav**-en like the **rush**

of a **might**-y wind,**/** in the **place** where they were **sit**-ting,**/**

al- le-lu- ia; **//**

The accents of the text are generally expressed through elongated neumes.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

RHYTHMIC RECITATION of TEXT

Su- den - ly , a sound came from **heav –**en like the **rush**

of a **might –** y wind, in the **place** where they were **sit** - ting,

Al- le– lu - ia.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Let's take a look at the score!

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Notice how the barlines generally line up with the punctuation except where the arrow above indicates.....

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Notice how the barlines generally line up with the punctuation except where the arrow above indicates.....
This is the point in the score where the schola would join the cantor, so it doesn't really indicate a rest or break!

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Solfeggio the chant

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Chironomy (optional, but always a good idea!)

COMMUNION

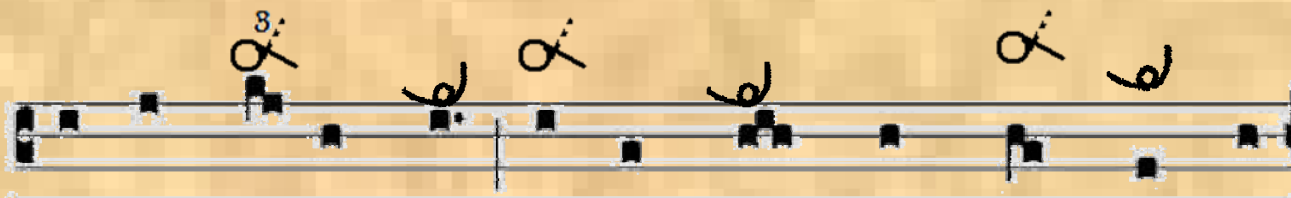*Factus est repente*   Acts 2: 2, 4

VII

SUddenly, a sound came from heaven * like the rush

of a mighty wind, in the place where they were sit-

ting, al-le-lu- ia;

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Sing through the selection now!

COMMUNION

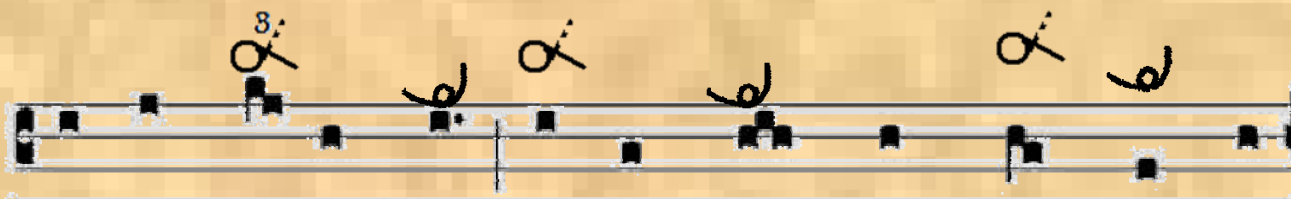*Factus est repente*   *Acts 2: 2, 4*

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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Singing Psalm-Tones in English

You will find that many of the settings for the Propers and the Responsorials employ Psalm-Tones for the recitation of verses.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Singing Psalm-Tones in English

You will find that many of the settings for the Propers and the Responsorials employ Psalm-Tones for the recitation of verses.

Psalm-Tones in English are notated and sung much the same as in Latin:

The Psalm-Tone is notated, giving the recitation tones, *flex* and *final* notes

1. My heart overflows with *noble* **words.** *
    To the king I address the song I *have* **made.** *

The Psalm text is given in *pointed* form.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Singing Psalm-Tones in English

Psalm 45 (44)

1. My heart overflows with *noble* **words**. *
   To the king I address the song I *have* **made**. *

2. You are the most handsome of the sons of men, †
   and graciousness is poured out up*on your* **lips**, *
   for God has blessed you forev*er***more**.

3. Gird your sword upon your *thigh, O* **might**y one, *
   with your splendor and *your* **majesty**.

   In your majesty ride on triumphant †
   in the cause of truth, meek*ness, and* **justice**. *
   May your right hand show your won*drous* **deeds**.

Singing a pointed English text to a given Psalm-Tone is no more difficult than singing a Latin text...

In fact, it may actually be easier!

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Remember....

•Follow the natural speech rhythm and accent...avoid the "typewriter" effect.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Remember....

•Follow the natural speech rhythm and accent...avoid the "typewriter" effect.

•Slow down slightly at the final cadence of each verse.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Pointing Texts in English

To point a text for singing to a Psalm-Tone...

I believed, even when I said,
"I am greatly afflicted."
Precious in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his faithful ones.

O LORD, I am your servant; †
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
you have loosed my bonds.
To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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•Identify the terminal accents of each pair of lines...

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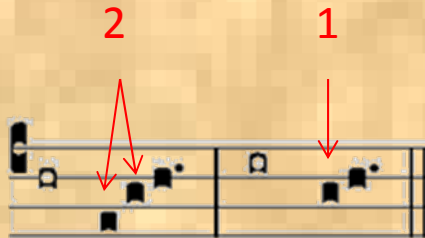
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To point a text for singing to a Psalm-Tone...

•Identify the terminal accents of each pair of lines...
They correspond to the dotted-notes of the Psalm-Tone
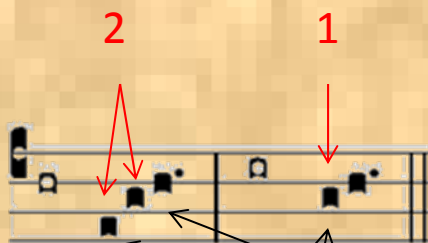
Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

2 1

I believed, even when I said,
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O LORD, I am your servant; †
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
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To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
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To point a text for singing to a Psalm-Tone...

•Determine the number of notes in the *flex* and *cadence* that precede the dotted-note...
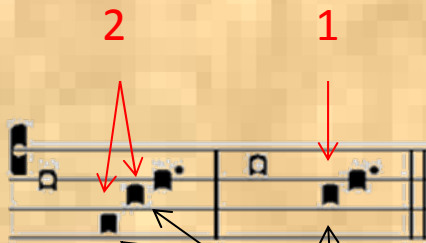
Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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To point a text for singing to a Psalm-Tone...

- Determine the number of notes in the *flex* and *cadence* that precede the dotted-note...

- Italicize (or mark) the corresponding number of *syllables* preceding the terminal accents.

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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To you will I offer sacrifice *of thanks*giving,
and I will call upon the name of *the* LORD.

Voila!

Let's Sing!

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

For a more thorough study of the relationship between the text and its musical expression in chant, I would recommend

SINGING CHANT: LATIN AND ENGLISH
A PERFORMANCE MANUAL
by
Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB
© Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 2011

This is available for download at
www.vernacularchant.blogspot.com

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

Stay Tuned for PART II....

"Resources for Vernacular Chant"

and PART III...

"Vernacular Chant in Your Parish Liturgies...
An Action Plan for Implementation"

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TERMINUS